

The Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services must be notified when an emergency is declared. This should be done by contacting Emergency Measures Ontario.



How EMO HELPS

EMO can help both before and after an emergency strikes.

PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

To help ensure sound workable emergency plans are developed in communities throughout Ontario, EMO has several area offices, in addition to its main office in downtown Toronto. Staff review existing plans and provide advice when new plans are drafted or when existing ones are revised. EMO staff also assist communities when exercises are held to test emergency plans.

In addition, EMO takes its emergency training courses on the road over 20 times per year. The *Emergency Preparedness and Response* course, the *Exercise Design* course and the *Emergency Public Information* course — each lasting three days — are designed to provide community officials with the basic knowledge required to develop local emergency preparedness programs.

Emergency Preparedness Canada also runs a number of emergency preparedness courses at its college in Arnprior, near Ottawa. Information on these courses can be obtained by contacting any EMO office.

Each year, over \$1 million in federal funding is provided to Ontario communities and agencies under the federal Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP). By

applying to EMO, communities across the province can access these funds. JEPP funds may be used for developing emergency plans, conducting exercises, public education, training emergency response officials and purchasing equipment. JEPP pays a portion of the cost for emergency preparedness projects and equipment.

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

In the event of a major emergency, Emergency Measures Ontario will assist the community in any way it can.

This may involve:

- ☒ sending a provincial liaison team to the community to provide advice and assistance, or,
- ☒ coordinating assistance from other provincial ministries and the federal government.

Emergency Measures Ontario monitors the province on a daily basis to track developing or declared emergencies, and staff are on-call 24-hours a day. The EMO duty officer can be reached during business hours at (416) 314-3723. After hours, the EMO duty officer may be reached through the Ontario Provincial Police duty officer at (705) 329-6950.

Ce document est également publié en français.

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For more information on Emergency Measures Ontario, please contact the main Toronto office or the area office nearest you.

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**PREPARING
FOR A SAFER
TOMORROW**

Ministry of the
Solicitor General and
Correctional Services

Ontario

EMERGENCIES IN ONTARIO — ARE YOU PREPARED?

Every community in Ontario — regardless of its size, location or resources — is subject to major emergencies. Severe storms, tornadoes, floods, forest fires, sudden releases of chemical or toxic substances, explosions and transportation accidents are just some of the emergencies communities can face. Being prepared and having plans in place should an emergency strike, can reduce risks to lives, health and property.

WHAT IS EMO?

Since 1979, Emergency Measures Ontario (EMO) — part of the Public Safety Division of the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services — has been responsible for helping ensure communities in Ontario are prepared for emergencies.

EMO works closely with the 830 municipalities, and the 129 First Nation communities in Ontario, to develop and test emergency plans. Approximately 600 municipalities in Ontario have developed their own emergency plans, as have a number of First Nation communities. These plans cover roughly 90 per cent of Ontario's population.

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY PLAN?

There are two emergency plans in place that describe how the province will respond to major emergencies: the provincial emergency plan and the provincial nuclear emergency plan. It is essential, however, that plans are also written at the local level.

A community emergency plan is a document prepared by a municipality or First Nation and accepted by the local council.

The plan lists emergencies most likely to occur in the community and identifies methods of dealing with them. Many businesses and facilities such as hospitals also find it useful to prepare emergency plans. It is important that these plans are linked with the community's larger plan.

Emergency plans save lives and money. If a community can respond to an emergency in an organized and effective manner, risks to the lives, health and property of all residents are reduced.

WHO PREPARES THE PLAN?

The Emergency Plans Act (1983), gives each municipality in Ontario the latitude to develop an emergency plan. While the legislation does not require most communities to prepare them, if an emergency does strike, the time spent working on the plan can prove invaluable.

EMO does not prepare plans for communities. Municipalities and First Nations may assign someone — often called an emergency planner — responsibility for preparing and maintaining the community's emergency plan. It is important that persons with a thorough knowledge of the area and the kinds of emergencies most likely to strike there be responsible for drafting the emergency plan.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A PLAN?

A good emergency plan should:

- ☒ identify who can declare an emergency, and once declared, who directs the emergency response, and
- ☒ indicate local officials and staff who should be notified.

It should also follow:

- ☒ the responsibilities of local emergency responders — police, firefighters, health and social service workers — in dealing with the emergency,
- ☒ assistance available from provincial or federal governments, neighbouring communities or volunteer groups, such as amateur radio or the Red Cross,
- ☒ resources available within the community, such as shelter and food for evacuees, and
- ☒ what to do if electricity, gas or water services are interrupted.

Local planners may work with staff from the surrounding county or region to prepare a joint plan. Arrangements with neighbouring municipalities, such as setting up mutual aid agreements, can also be incorporated into the plan. Local fire, police and emergency health services — always the first ones to be notified in the event of an emergency — are always involved in some way with the plan.

While no one can foresee every type of emergency, it is important to plan for as many scenarios as possible.

For most Ontario communities, an emergency plan would anticipate emergencies caused by severe weather conditions like blizzards or tornadoes.

Of course, there will always be regional differences. While remote areas of the province may need to plan for forest fires, urban areas would not have the same concerns. In addition, if a community finds itself dealing repeatedly with the same

emergency — for example, a First Nation in northern Ontario experiencing severe flooding each spring — then it is essential that the emergency plan reflects this.

WHAT IF THERE IS A NUCLEAR FACILITY IN MY COMMUNITY?

Communities that are in close proximity to a nuclear facility must prepare a nuclear emergency plan. According to the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan, if an emergency is caused by an accident at a nuclear generating station, Emergency Measures Ontario, working with Ontario Hydro and the affected municipality, is responsible for coordinating off-site public safety.

The response to a nuclear emergency is much the same as the response to other kinds of emergencies. Plans are in place to deal with the emergency, staff are trained to respond appropriately and plans are tested regularly. Information specific to communities located near Ontario nuclear facilities is available, and can be obtained by contacting EMO.

WHEN IS AN EMERGENCY DECLARED?

An emergency may be declared when local or regional emergency responders find they cannot meet the demands of a situation, or when an emergency escalates into a disaster. In either case, the community almost always requires assistance from provincial or federal governments in the form of funding, staff, supplies or equipment.

It is up to the local or regional head of council to declare an emergency. The premier of Ontario can also declare an emergency.

